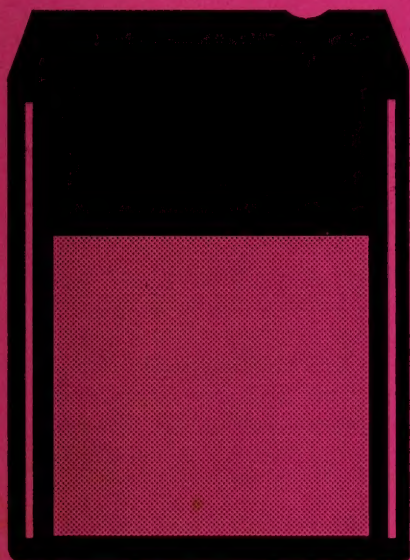


8-TRACK MIND

M A G A Z I N E

Winter 1994 #83

\$2



THE UNLIMITED FUTURE OF 8-TRACK

3 3/4 IPS

THE MINDS BEHIND THE MIND

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STATEMENT OF PURPOSE

We of the 8-TRACK MIND are dedicated to our one pursuit: to keep analog alive (in whatever form) for the coming day of its ultimate victory. We will supercede all formats yet to emerge. We and our followers adhere to the doctrine of the 8 NOBLE TRUTHS OF THE 8-TRACK MIND in all of our intellectual and creative pursuits.

FINE PRINT

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**Cover: *Tracking to Infinity*
by Brendan deVallance
(modified by F. R. Forster)**

A PERSONAL NOTE FROM YOUR EDITOR

by F. R. "Russ" Forster

Fellow Trackers,

This year has brought much triumph for *8-Track Mind* but much turmoil as well. The 8-TM film which I have been working on (with the wonderful title *So Wrong They're Right* thanks to Phil Milstein) has eaten up much more of my time than I expected, which has made getting this issue out on deadline an impossibility. I apologize for any inconvenience caused by my tardiness in publishing this issue and beg your indulgence. When the film is finally finished and available for viewing in some form (hopefully projected rather than emitted image) in your home town, I think I will have my vindication for the unfortunate neglect of this magazine and its correspondents that has taken place the past few months.

That said, there is an excitement around 8-TM Central that has not been seen since the very early days. The film is not even finished and its already getting national attention from such unlikely sources as *CMJ Monthly* magazine, who wrote about it in their December issue. Add to that some offhand mentions of *8-Track Mind* in *Time*, *Magnet*, *Fiz*, and other magazines in recent months, and you have a completely unexpected explosion of interest occurring in the media, perhaps explained by the '70s nostalgia that certain books and bands have been engaging in recently. I took a rough cut of the film to the east coast and to

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Chicago for some impromptu screenings, and found audiences extremely enthusiastic. Even people who weren't and will probably never be trackers found themselves taken in by the eccentric but articulate personalities of the film. 92 minutes seems to fly by for most people, and the nearly standing ovations the film received in Washington D.C. and Chicago proved to me that *So Wrong They're Right* is not a typical "talking heads" type of documentary.

So what bearing does all this recent success here at 8-TM have on the future of 8-track itself? Well, as I've alluded to before in these pages, success comes as a double-edged sword to the world of 8-track. A new generation of "weekend trackers" is developing — people who get into 8-track for a few months because "it's cool," and then send everything to the dumpster when the next trend enters their lives. These people are an extremely destructive force to the world of trackdom, because they will only serve to drive up prices on tapes and players while they make fun of rather than have fun with 8-track. Luckily, though, these people tend to be lazy in their destructiveness, so there's a good chance that the positive effects of 8-track mania will outweigh the negative.

One of the most exciting positive aspects of the burgeoning interest in 8-T is a reversal of the bad name that masters of marketing were able to give to 8-track when they decided to kill it. It's amazing to me that cassette tapes are held in higher esteem than 8-tracks when the best cassettes seem to self-destruct after 10 to 15 years. I have many 8-tracks that are over 20 years old and still going strong. Yet the public perception is that cassette tapes are useful and "cool," and 8-track tapes are useless and hopelessly nerdy. My hope is that greater interest in this magazine and in my film will fuel a questioning of the trends in recorded music formats of the past 20 years and a reevaluation of the formats that were supposedly "improved upon."

Of course, smaller minds are going to insist, as they always have, that 8-track does not have a future, and barely had a past. To most of these people, "sense of humor" is relegated to the David Lettermanian world of laughing at that which you can not possibly understand. Unfortunately, these minds are in the majority in this country (see the results of the last national elections if you need confirmation), and probably always will be. But majority or not, they can never stop the rest of us from questioning, rebelling, and having as much fun as we can afford on our paltry service-industry incomes. So join us in the 8-track revolution — but don't forget your dancing shoes.

Happy Tracking,

F. R. "Russ" Forster
F. R. "Russ" Forster∞



Letters to the Mind

SO MANY QUESTIONS, SO LITTLE TIME

As far as Playtapes go, I remember that they were offered for one Christmas (1969, I suppose) and were in the Sears Christmas "Wish Book" for that year, from which my parents bought me one. I had a portable radio-like model, with its own carrying case, with a compartment for the tapes, and a hole in the side of the carrying case to stick the tape through, and an opening in the front to allow the music to escape from the speaker...

I was rather deeply into Glen Campbell at the time, so most of my Playtapes were condensations of G.C. albums with two songs per track, four songs total. Other people I had were *Laugh-In '69* (Epic), Petula Clark's *Greatest Hits* (Warner Bros.),...and *Rotary Connection* (Cadet Concept, with "Aladdin" and "Magical World")... A Beatles Playtape is pictured on the inner fold-out of the *Hollywood Bowl* LP in its original packaging... I lost my no-longer-working-but-still-well-preserved Playtape case and player/tapes in the late '70s, alas.

In the mid-'80s I joined the RCA record club, signing up for 8-tracks. I joined in the "Rock" category, but about half the time they'd substitute the rock selection with the Country selection for the 8-track buyers. One time Madonna's *True Blue* was announced as the month's selection, but I think something else ended up being substituted. The last 8-track I got from them (in '88) was a two-volume Laurie Records oldies compilation...

Er, what does Eldon Potter mean about "the emergence of 8-track as a 'hip' medium circa 1976-77"? Aren't we maybe getting caught up in childhood memories/getting caught up in the "remember those fabulous '70s" thing? How would the 8-track have moved into being more "hip" in 1976-77 than it was in 1970-75? In fact, wouldn't the growing acceptance of cassettes during 1976-77 have started the 8-track down the road of less "hip"? I suppose you're right with your guess that *Rumours* is the best-selling 8 of all time, simply because of its general massive sales. I believe *Saturday Night Fever* sold still more...

The price points of 8-Ts and other formats deserve exploration. I recall that up until the midish '80s Caldor's (the local equivalent of K-Mart) priced all tapes higher than LPs.

How late did reel-to-reels last? I once saw a Michael Jackson *Thriller* reel-to-reel... Your use of Madonna 8-tracks as a symbol of "modern music" on 8 makes me wonder, how about rap/hip-hop on 8-track? When the first rap releases came out in 1979-81, about the only LP rap releases during that period were Sugarhill Gang...and Kurtis Blow. How about '77-era punk (on major labels, obviously). The Clash and Sex Pistols have been mentioned — how about the Ramones?...Pere Ubu? Suicide Commandos? The early *Live at Max's* and *Live at CBGB's* anthologies? A few years ago I recall an interview with one of the Dickies wherein he said that their early LPs had not been on tape (until late '80s reissues of). The Buzzcocks?

...What's the latest release 8 you've had or seen? You say 1989...Living in Green Bay, Wisconsin, I saw an ad on local TV for a Gene Pitney compilation that was being offered on cassette, CD, LP and 8-track, all simultaneously, in 1990 or

'91. As recently as '93 while still in Green Bay I saw a Nashville Network ad for a Red Sovine album on all four, too. . How late did pre-rock/MOR pop specialists like Good Music Co. continue with pressing 8s?

How late did 8s go in England? I have (had) an 8-track of Slik's (with Midge Ure) only LP, with a different track listing and cover (presumably corresponding to the British LP). I remember once seeing a British Roxy Music 8-T (*Country Life*, I think).

I once (mid-'80s, cut-out) saw an 8-track of Ornette Coleman's *Dancing In Your Head* LP. Some years ago when I was in an extremely desperate personal state, I was selling off some of my records. I'd found a 3 8-track Capitol boxed set of Buck Owens' LPs — sealed when I bought it. I tried to sell it along with some other stuff that the record store didn't want, as I remember the bark ("Nobody wants this crap!"), and, despairing, disgusted, I'm afraid I sent the Buck 8s sailing over the fence onto the highway below. It was Central Avenue, in Yonkers, just up from the library, if anybody wants to know. Yes, I looked to see if anyone was coming on first!

One of the last K-Tel albums I saw on 8 was a collection of "the hottest music on the street" that featured the likes of Eddy Grant's "Electric Avenue" and Elton John's "I'm Still Standing"...

Your comment on counterfeit copies of major-label LPs made me remember a copy of Shaun Cassidy's first LP that I got in the early '80s in a bargain bin. It had the blurb on the cover for "Free Poster," but it didn't have the free poster included and the cover and label looked dimmer than the cover and label on a copy that did have the poster. I've sometimes wondered if the major-label rush to offer more lengthy foldouts in cassettes was possibly motivated by the thought that lyrics/graphics would be more trouble for crooks to duplicate and that maybe violation of copyright of the lyrics and graphics is more easily prosecutable than unauthorized duplication of a sound recording is. Is it? I meant to put that section earlier in the letter, actually, and mention the recent rap lyric fixation on the subject of bootleg tapes and segue from that into my comment on rap on 8, but I forgot about the bootleg connection until now...

I wrote a portion of this letter while at Maxwell's in Hoboken to see Gumball on Thursday, Aug. 4th, mostly before Gumball's set and during the between set breaks. I also wanted to try and get Don Fleming to autograph my copy of *8-TM*! However, after Gumball's set was over, Don disappeared rather quickly — in fact, the rest of the band played only one instrumental encore, without him. I guess he was feeling grumpy that night! They did a good set, however.

...When did the various record clubs combine their separate record, tape clubs into record/tape divisions of the same club?

The same record store in Yonkers where I attempted to sell the Buck Owens boxed 8 set used to have some of those Philco Hip-Pocket records in their oldies section — I kind of tend to think they originated from a little bit earlier than 1970 — the repertoire on them tended to be '67-'68-ish, I think, things like Aretha's "Respect," the Beatles "Hey Jude" in an edit version,...the Happenings, late-period Leslie Gore — the ones I saw had nice looking sleeves anyway!

...Oh, I forgot — I remember, about 1989, Devo's "comeback" album, on Enigma/Restless records, was mentioned in a story at the time as "we almost pressed it on 8-track too, but we couldn't find press time."

...I found your magazine at the downtown Tower Records in New York. A partial "hurrah!" for "hip" capitalism, I guess!

W. Loyd Lilly
27-H Springvale Rd.
Croton-On-Hudson, NY 10520

EDITOR: Ya know, Mr. Lilly, for someone from New York, you sure ask a lotta questions! Rap on 8-track? The last 8-T made? The last English 8-T made? Lyrics/graphics copyrights? Record/tape club consolidation? All of this is outside of my area of expertise, but maybe someone out there in TV-land can help. I do know of Ramones 8-Ts (up until End of the Century, at least) and have Rock and Roll High School in my personal collection, and I covet Dead Boys and Voidoids releases that I know exist, but I think you can give up any hopes of finding Suicide Commandos or Pere Ubu stuff on 8 — they didn't make it into the tape clubs responsible for so many 8-T oddities.

THE MOST VALUABLE 8-TRACK, PART II

Thanks for sending me a copy of the *8-Track Mind* with my letter and clipping in it. Isn't it odd that the day after receiving it (and reading it cover to cover) I happened to be at the local Public Library where I chanced upon a copy of Goldmine's *Price Guide to Collectible Record Albums*. Not being a collector myself I was unfamiliar with the publication, but remembering the eloquently expressed views of Trent Colby and Brendan deVallance on the topic of 8-track collecting I decided to take a look. I started flipping through the book and what did I find but a story on THE \$5,000 EIGHT-TRACK!!! Take a look at the enclosed photocopy. This may be something you already know about, but I was stunned. Five Gs for an 8-track! I wouldn't give five bucks for the thing but then, like I said, I'm not a collector. (How much does the standard 8-track weigh? And what is the price of gold per ounce? This thing is probably worth its weight in gold!)

Well, I was tempted once again to subscribe to your publication, but have decided to save up so that I can buy a VHS copy of your movie instead. (A mountain of 30,000 8-tracks! This I have got to see!) So send me a flier when it gets finished and as long as the price isn't too far out I'll be ordering one. I don't have any 8-tracks myself, and my house is so cram-packed full of stuff from the thrifts that I've realized I've got to draw the line somewhere. Every time I move it's a major logistical nightmare involving countless hours of backbreaking toil spent lugging liquor store boxes full of cool stuff bought at flea markets for 50¢. So I'm going to limit myself to LP records, CDs, and the occasional cassette. BUT the thrifts in the midwest DO still carry 8-T carts and I'll keep my eyes out for any truly interesting 8-T carts and mail them your way. I'm also going to get on the butt of my friend Jimbo the artist in New York. Years ago he showed me a comic he drew called "The 8-Track King" about a record company exec who failed to foresee the demise of the format and the consequences this had. I'll try to submit it to your zine.

John Gardner
P.O. Box 442
Vermillion, SD 57069

EDITOR: The clipping from Goldmine was printed in 8-TM #81, and involves a tape called Frank Sinatra with Antonio Carlos Jobim which was cancelled by Frank and marked for destruction. Only 3 are known to exist.

A BRAND NEW QUAD CONNECTION

I collect Quadraphonic 8-tracks. I HATE 8-tracks but am stuck with them because I love Quadraphonic. I've learned to repair almost every problem with them. Wet/dry sand plastic "glazed" pinch roller, refoam, refoil, take winds out of center when running tight, and dump spool on floor and hand wind dubble album without creasing tape, you name it! I can offer a repair service for people who need it. The reason I do this is to remaster them onto 4-channel cassette. I go from an Akai CR80Dss deck to a Yamaha MT120 deck. I clean the heads after every recording to get the best possible dub. They come out 100% discrete and include balancing instructions. Anyways, that's my connection with 8-tracks. I have over 200 Quads now and most are available for trade (or possibly sale on some) on ones that I have not yet remastered. If people in your club would also like to trade Q8s, then we might have something here.

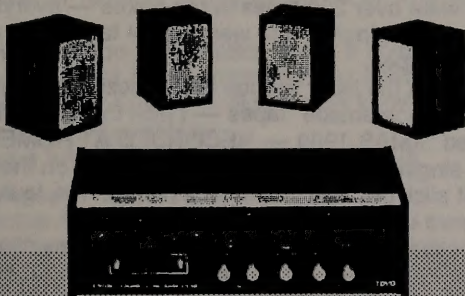
Prepare yourself for the shock of the Qaudio Sound Experience.

Qaudio* is the unexpected new experience in listening pleasure. It's the living, breathing reality of four-channel sound.

If you remember how stereo put you in the music hall, now Qaudio puts you on the stage. It envelops you in the center of the sound.

Qaudio is our 4-channel high fidelity cartridge tape player music system.

Insert a cartridge and the shock of four distinct sounds from four surrounding speakers creates a completely new musical experience. The ambience is so real, it's unreal.



I just finished rebuilding the Enoch Light Big Band Hit albums in Quad. They are out of this world. If you have club members with Ford Quadrasonic players these tapes are simply the best. It would be fun to trade around Quadraphonic 8-tracks so if you're interested let me know.

I would like to buy a box of 500 new foams, please tell me if they are still available. I currently "trash out" newer stereo 8-tracks just for the foam which I think is quite wasteful.

Chris Pickering
2030 N. Academy Blvd.
Colorado Springs, CO 80909

EDITOR: I guess it's up to you "club members" because I don't even have a Quad deck of my own!

CAN ANYONE FIGGER THIS ONE OUT?

I am looking for a positive to negative ground converter for my Audiovox stereo. My 1962 TR4 is a positive ground. I also have the capability to build the device if I have a schematic.

Tom Cohn
2 Aspen Drive
Mahopac, NY 10541

EDITOR: Yikes! I haven't a clue as to what you refer, but maybe some electro-heads in our studio audience can help me out.

FLEA MARKET FRENZY!

...Your mag just keeps getting better and better. The thrift stores around here have seemed to dry up as a source of 8s, but I've made a few good finds recently. I put up a card on the bulletin board at work asking if anyone was smart enough to have hung onto their tapes and would be willing to give them a new home. A guy contacted me and said he still had some in his basement. When we looked for them we found not only a stash of 75 hard rock tapes, but also a top-of-the-line Realistic deck with record and fast-forward that was still in the box! I traded him a Johnny Berich baseball card for the whole lot. I also made a big find at a flea market. A guy had 2 big boxes of 8s for a quarter apiece. The first one I pulled out was *Magical Mystery Tour*. I also noticed 4 different Frank Zappa tapes. I asked him what he wanted for the whole lot, and he said "I've been lugging these damned things around for years now and nobody's ever bought any, so how about \$10?" Being the cheap bastard that I am, I talked him down to \$7. When I got home and counted them there were over 200 tapes in the boxes — everything from The MC5 to Jimmy Swaggert. Surprisingly, there were only 4 tapes with melted pinch rollers, and they were all CCR tapes.

To be honest, I think the letter section is the most interesting part of your 'zine. Someone wrote about "homemade" tapes — I pick these up whenever I see them. I just got one entitled "XMAS 1980 — RECORDED AT HOME" — some unknown person's attempt at singing bad country music. I'm also on the lookout for tapes of radio stations — just stick the tape in and let it record. I've found a few of these but unfortunately they were of a jazz station (I hate jazz).

Here's a suggestion: why not start a "Classifieds" section in your mag? I'm sure a lot of people would be interested in contacting other Trackers who are

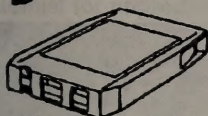
looking to buy/sell/trade tapes, or maybe just meeting other collectors in their area. As a final note, if anybody has ANYTHING by The Ramones or Go-Gos and would be willing to part with it for a reasonable price, please let me know. Also, does anybody know anything about 4-tracks?

Jim Kacmarsky
714 S. Andre St. #7
Saginaw, MI 48602

EDITOR: Wow, that flea market score is one of the best I've heard in a while. The Classifieds idea was tried in issues #69 and #70, but it never seemed to catch on, so we started our "Plugs" section instead. I think that section and the Letters section cover what would be in Classifieds, but I could be wrong.

Mail postpaid card to get

Any 5 for **\$100**
plus mailing and handling



8-track cartridges

BUSINESS REPLY MAIL

No Postage Stamp Necessary If Mailed in the United States

Postage will be paid by

COLUMBIA TAPE CLUB
Terre Haute, Indiana
47808

Please accept my membership. I am interested in the following recorded entertainment: (check one box only)

- ☒ **8-Track Cartridges (54-W) 109**
☐ **Tape Cassettes (AM-X)**
☐ **Reel-to-Reel Tapes (BW-Y)**

Send me three 5 selections, for which I will be billed only \$1.00, plus mailing and handling:

Write in numbers of the 5 selections you want

I agree to buy six selections during the coming year, and may cancel membership any time thereafter. If I continue, I will be eligible for your bonus plan. All selections will be described in advance in the Club magazine, sent every four weeks. If I do not want any selection, I'll return the selection card by the date specified - or use it to order any selection I do want. If I want only the regular selection, I need do nothing - it will be sent automatically. From time to time, I'll be offered special selections which I may accept or reject by using the dated form provided.

MY MAIN MUSICAL INTEREST IS (check one box only):

- ☐ Easy Listening ☐ Young Sounds ☐ Country

☐ Mr.
☐ Mrs.
☐ Miss.....
Please Print First Name Initial Last Name

Address.....

City.....

State..... Zip Code.....

Do You Have A Telephone? (Check one) ☐ YES..... ☐ NO
APO, FPO addresses: write for special offer

MADONNA, QUEEN OF THE 8-TRACK

This letter arrives in regards to any reference of who sells Madonna 8-track tapes.

I heard you on a Chicago radio station about a couple of months ago. I'm an avid Madonna fan and would like to know, do you know of any reference of who would sell Madonna 8-track tapes? I didn't even know that some of Madonna's albums were released on 8-track tapes.

I have enclosed a SASE. Full cooperation is needed!

Ronald L. Vagnoni
2600 N. Brinton Ave.
P.O. Box 1200
Dixon, IL 61021

EDITOR: Yeesh! I sure as heck am not giving out my address, with all these Ramones and Madonna freaks coveting tapes in my collection. My advice is to go back to the source and write to Columbia House at the address in the ad on the previous page. You can even copy the page and send it to them as is!

YET ANOTHER SEEKER OF THE HOLY GRAIL

I saw the review of your 'zine in *FIZ* and it's exactly what I'm looking for. I'm the only person I know who likes 8-tracks and it's nice to see that I'm not alone in the world. I'm looking for the Stooges *Funhouse* on 8-track. Any idea where I can find it?

Mike Frame
239 N. 1st
Montrose, CO 81401

EDITOR: Below is a photo of me fixing the splice on that very tape in Cambridge, MA. But that tape is probably in the top-10 of most-wanted 8-tracks, and is not to be found even in my extensive collection. Good luck!



THE SECOND "MILLENNIUM" OF 8-TRACK?

Being the well-rounded 8-ball you are, do you fully understand the religious implications of forthcoming issue #88? Certainly this must be viewed as a dedicated tracker's SECOND MILLENNIUM (the first being issue #8). Also, it could be an opportune time to review Jimmy Swaggart's works on infinite loop along with scrutinizing white-bread gospel crud, Beethoven's 9th (did you know that it was compositionally the deciding factor for designing the original length of a CD — 74 minutes), J.C. Superstar, etc.

In the "ambitious" department, how 'bout coordinating an 8-TM gathering in your glorious pit of urban decay (i.e. Detroit) to celebrate this monumental occasion. Live bands, a swap meet, night-owl discussions, the premiere showing of your finished film, fistfights between analog quarter-inch purists and CD traitors... The possibilities are spliceless.

On a sour point, an issue that generally gives me indigestion is reading about 8-track zealots expounding nirvana when unearthing such miserable Mass-Media musical experiences on cart such as Partridge Family's *Shopping Bag* (#76, page 5) or Neil Diamond's *Live* (#82, page 12). I'm well aware of the concept that one person's "trash" is another's "treasure" since I thoroughly enjoy preposterous, immature, infantile and/or inept 7-inch rotund slabs of subgum first wave authentic '60s garage rock that peg the needle on the Stupidometer. But when thinking people rave on about *Saturday Night Fever* (#81, page 15), I feel they're only jiving themselves into oblivion.

Avoiding the obvious explosive issue of musical taste, an important postulate can be determined from this maddening realization: IF listener "A" gets "X" amount of pleasure from musical experience "Z," THEN it would be safe to assume that "A" would receive endless (∞) pleasure from "Z" on the holy 8-track format unless he/she refuses to pay his/her electric bill and/or (God forbid) his/her splice becomes worn out and dies in mid-mission. Incorporating this hypothesis into my own personal taste parameters, perpetual John's Children's *Orgasm* would send me into la la land but Anne Murray's *Snowbird* would slump me into a never-ending spiral with a potential for unpredictable actions that would make Jeffrey Dahmer look like Hershey Park USA.

OR in layman's terms, when it's good, it's really good on Mighty 8. Conversely, when it's heinous on the infinite loop, you better pull the plug before it unplugs you.

I get no thrill out of jive trackers putting on their pretentious propelled beanie claiming to admire a musical repertoire they wouldn't be caught dead coveting on PVC or 44.1 K. Come on wise folk, don't hop the opportunity train when it only takes you to WalMart.

P.S. Speaking of dreck, does anyone out there in spiceland own a copy of the Herd's 1967 *Looking Thru You* LP on 8? It came out domestically on Fontana, which doesn't seem to be one of the most prolific cart labels. The band, which features a pre-talk box" Peter Frampton, is mostly wretched overproduced Tea-Bag slop. Ironically, I must have played it over 300 times which proves if you spin or loop something enough times, your immune system for good taste is bound to break down.

This disease has caused me to collect Herd artifacts for well over 20 years. In the "honest" but "embarrassing" department, I have accumulated 3 and 7/16ths inches worth of Herd, Judas Jump, and Andy Bown 45s if measured along their spines. "Paradox Lost."

Erik Lindgren
922 Mass. Ave. #12
Cambridge, MA 02139

EDITOR: As one who has been known to expound the virtues of both Ms. Murray and Mr. Diamond at various times, I hasten to point out that bad taste knows no bounds. However, your point about those who would patronizingly turn 8-track into "that cute, kitschy format from the goofy '70s" is well-taken, as is your brilliant idea for a tracker gathering in Spring 1996, perhaps in the less-depressing and more rockin' Ann Arbor, MI.

8-TRACK'S NOT DEAD, AND HERE'S PROOF!

Just a quick note to inform you and perhaps readers of *8-TM* that 8-tracks can still be purchased — or at least one can still be purchased.

I saw an advertisement on Country Music Television (CMT) a couple of weeks ago for a Marty Robbins compilation titled *Number 1 Cowboy*. And lo and behold, the thing was available in LP, CD, Cassette — and 8-Track formats. Though dubious, I dialed the number given in the ad, asked to order the 8-track, and was told it would arrive in 4 to 6 weeks. If any other 8-TM readers are interested, the CMT number is 1-800-443-2112. The number to order the 8-T is (I think) 1-800-871-5830. The phone numbers are correct, but I may have CMT's and the Robbins's number reversed. (Sorry.) The cost was \$15.95.

Sam Umland
511 West 35th St.
Kearney, NE 68847

EDITOR: Hoo-weee! Them truckers are doin' their part to keep 8-track alive, God bless 'em all.

HOW TO HAVE FUN AND INFLUENCE PEOPLE

...I enjoy the music (fix 'em while I listen), also the collecting — BUT this nasty, self-centered, screw you attitude of these mint grubbing mercenaries is almost scary.

What could be an activity of friendship, sharing, and goodwill becomes an exercise in competition, greed and foul disposition. Profit is O.K. for those who are in need or those who must but do they also have a need to be mean-spirited?

...Quote you: "It's exciting though just a tiny bit silly" — NOT SILLY, JUST FUN. As a country we have no sense of "play." Unless we are competing and ritualistically stomping the shit out of someone we don't have an excuse to play?

P.S. I have a copy of that Sex Pistols tape — what garbage! Johnny Rotten (John Lydon) has done an autobiography. He was the first to say "Fuck" on British T.V. I'll keep my obscurity and do without his music — you want the tape? We could counter the verified sales with *Never Mind the Bullocks* at 1¢...

Dale R. Legenfelder
P.O. Box 171
Kent, WA 98035

EDITOR: Your comments on "play" are certainly well-taken from where I sit. When tracking becomes a chore or a struggle I'll be moving on to another way to spend my time. As far as your Sex Pistols offer goes, I already have the tape and one copy is all I need, so perhaps a lucky reader will be able to grab the offer I'm passing up.

SHARING THE 8-TRACK WEALTH

Hey, man! I went to the Goodwill here in town today, and saw these, thought you might like them! I cleaned up for myself, too, walked out with \$50 worth of 75¢ vinyl, including 2 Little Anthony and the Imperials disks, Tom Jones, Leif Garrett, Roberta Flack, Marvin Gaye, CCR, Partridge Family, Greg Kihn, Bronski Beat, some early rap, some religious spoken-word stuff, sooo beautiful! I also got around 10 of those great covered instrumental records from the '50s and '60s, with stylishly coiffed lasses leaning over pianos and sipping martinis, Urge Overkill would be proud! So now, I'm drinking wine from a bottle shaped like a fish and listening to it all, such a joy!

Kenyata
P.O. Box 2071
Wilmington, NC 28402-2071

EDITOR: Thanks for the boss tapes! I would recommend checking out the Pandora's Lunchbox 7" on Shimmy-Disc (\$3 to Kenyata) and writing for his excellent newsletter.

WAVE THE BLACK FLAG

...Finally found an issue after a year's search at Orbit Music on the west side of South Bend.

I thought I was all alone picking up machines and tapes here and there. I even pulled one out of a Toyota (nice Sanyo pullout) before the crusher got it.

I've found some good advice for your publication — seal new purchases in a plastic bag and spray roach killer in it. They love the things too.

I hit 200 tapes today. Goodwill: 50% off — 37.5¢ each. Thanks for the confirmation, 8-tracks are fun.

Douglas M. Lindsey
26604 W. Edison Rd.
South Bend, IN 46628

EDITOR: Thanks for the tip, although I've been lucky to only find spiders and not roaches in my tapes (so far...).



FINALLY SOME HOMETOWN RECOGNITION

...I'm really glad a mag so happening is coming out of Detroit. Of course with most cool Detroit things they don't get recognized around here until someone from somewhere else writes about it.

I read about *B-TM* in some magazine then my roommate Bob "Bootsey X" Muhoney brought one home. I was instantly so into it. It's so well written and

entertaining — the stories are really funny and interesting. It's just a fuckin' great 'zine.

I used to be in a band called the Gories, now I'm in the Demolition Doll Rods and Rocket 455. We did a show here in Detroit with a Toronto band called the Leather Uppers. We took them around to some 2nd hand stores. I was looking at the records not yet tuned in to the world of 8-track, Greg from the Uppers checks this small box of 8-tracks that was right under my nose and found Funkadelic's *Free Your Mind* on 8-track. So I'm getting more conscious of checking the 8-tracks at the thrift stores.

When I was a kid my Dad was not a big music fan and he would only buy a really cheap stereo for the family room (we didn't get a color TV 'til about 1981) (he's just kinda cheap in general). So anyway this stereo he bought had only an AM/FM radio and a 8-track so my Mom went out and bought a bunch of 8-tracks. I think she felt really hip when she brought home Elton John's *Goodbye Yellow Brick Road* on 8-track. This being 1973 and myself being 8 years old I felt, are they forkin' hip listening to that tape all the time? It quickly became my fave tape. But considering the fact that my Mom had all of Neil Diamond's and John Denver's 8-tracks, good ole EJ was about the closest to some real rock'n'roll as my Mom wanted to get. She also had Carly Simon, The Carpenters, the *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* soundtrack, Frank Sinatra, James Taylor — you get the picture. Well, one day our house was broken into and the thieves took the cheap-o stereo and one single 8-track — yup, the *Jonathan Livingston Seagull* soundtrack. They could have had the whole Diamond/Denver collection and they only took that one tape! My whole family was puzzled by this. So we ended up getting another stereo almost exactly like it. (Still no record player.) If I wanted to listen to a record I had to play it on our kids record player which was a "Show and Tell." I can't remember what they called it but it was yellow plastic and there was a turntable on top and a little built-in speaker and a 6" by 6" screen on the front. You could buy records that came with a book and a little film strip. You could play the record and load the film strip into a slot on top and the record would tell the story, the film strip would show pictures on this little screen and you could follow all this action in your little book. I wish I could remember what the thing was called. I would feed pieces of paper with a picture on it into the slot hoping that it would show up on the screen. (No, it didn't work.)

I used to play the *Thunderball* soundtrack on this record player. I was a 10 year old James Bond fanatic. I also had the *Live and Let Die* soundtrack LP. My sister found the Jackson 5 45 "I'll Be There" in the alley and we used to play that on our little "Show and Tell" record player. Oh man how could I forget, my Mom bought us the Osmond Brothers' *Crazy Horses* 8-track (1974) and that was our fave! We used to do little lip-sync acts to that song. My sister and I had plastic guitars. I had a blue plastic acoustic model with a stars and stripes design on the front. My sister had a white plastic "electric" model with flowers on it and my little brother had an orange plastic banjo. Since we liked that tape so much my mom bought a Donny Osmond solo 8-track. We used to listen to it all the time. We really dug the Osmonds/Jackson 5 Saturday morning cartoons.

I too was a Wacky Packages fanatic, although I didn't get hip to 'em until the 5th series came out. My friends had all those 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th series ones, but I got some only after that. I too noticed that some stickers, one or two in the series, were really pretty rare. My Mom actually bought a whole box of Wacky Packs from a wholesaler (not a big carton, like a box of 20) but I still couldn't find the one I

wanted. But man, I loved those things and I still have a stack of about 30 or 40 of them. The artwork is really cool. And they're detailed and really funny, sick, weird but you know all that.

A couple of years ago I bought a 1969 Toyota with an 8-track player in it. I still had my Styx *Grand Illusion* 8-track which I got in the 8th grade so I popped it in there and it worked! For about 5 minutes, but man, I was surprised at how good it sounded.

I also really like the way that you throw a lot of philosophy about life in general into your mag. I'm into philosophy and all that shit...

Dan Kroha
5079 Grayton
Detroit, MI 48224

EDITOR: A little reciprocal back slapping: The Gories and The Demolition Doll Rods are two of the bands that have kept Detroit from slipping into mediocrity since the Rock glory days of the '60s and '70s. It's no surprise that the Doll Rods recently toured with rockheads The Jon Spencer Blues Explosion, kicking butt all the way. Bravo!

In its short history, Curve of the Earth has issued 11 releases and has three more ready to go in all four formats. Four? CD, cassette, vinyl and, uh, eight-track. Yes, there's a sense of humor in this operation. Even black humor. They've released music by a group called the David Koresh Experience; music by the River Phoenix Five; an Elevator Drops song called "Lennon Is Dead."

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BROADCASTING MY INTENTIONS

I listened to your interview with Steve and Johnnie on Sunday, August 21, 1994, and noted that you claimed you do not own an 8-track player.

I have in my possession a JVC unit and would be happy to know if you would like it. Some years ago, after my husband died, I discovered that we had 2 8-track players. I remember now that I tried to use one of them — had trouble with the tape gumming up, and subsequently tossed it and the tape.

In the meantime, I had discovered several unused tapes. I donated them to the Northwestern University Audio/Visual Lab.

I called WGN on Sunday and was kept on hold so long, I just couldn't wait to talk to you.

If you have any interest in the JVC, please drop me a line and we can see about getting it to you.

Juliet Cohen
200 Ridge Ave., Apt. 1B
Evanston, IL 60202

EDITOR: Thanks to the baseball strike, The Steve and Johnny show on gargantuan Chicago AM station WGN had an extra hour to kill by talking about 8-track with me. On a later trip to Chicago I visited Ms. Cohen, who not only gave me a player but a slough of mint-condition tapes as well. Her generosity should warm the hearts of even the most jaded readers.

THE END OF THE 7000 8-TRACK TAPES

Hi. Reed at In Your Ear Records cleaned out a good 6 boxes (540 tapes) now near the end of the pile. There's even a final 7 boxes he's gonna want (lame rock chart albums) at about 5 1/2¢ a tape. So there's even an additional \$30-40 to probably come in later on.

Here's my log tracing the \$\$...It comes out to \$160 I unloaded on my own through the letters column addresses, \$90 to Mr. Bucks, and \$120 to the 2 dealers in Nevada and Arizona. Then \$150 via the readers from the article I did (in issue #81), and the final \$85 via In Your Ear.

The tapes are all gone (just about). I've got 200 very killer tapes for free, and here's the residue in cash (at this point) for you guys as promised.

Here's about 10 of those cheezy "cover song" tapes to use as a giveaway... tho' I'm not sure who in their right mind would want them.

Mike Saunders
c/o Mike's Mom
242 Kingsrow Drive
Little Rock, AR 72207

EDITOR: Thanks for the \$31 and the great sound-alike tapes. Some of the music on those cheezy tapes made it into the 8-TM film, believe it or not. So Wrong They're Right indeed.



8-TRACK BONANZA IN PROVIDENCE

A quick run-down of my new finds: Elvis Costello *My Aim Is True*, Ventures *Ventures in Space* (sealed), Clash *London Calling*, Devo *Are We Not Men?*, Redd

Foxx At Home, and (brace yourself) *Instrumental Hits of the Beatles as Performed by...THE DECIBALS!!!* Yes, The Decibals from the *Tommy* boot tape.

Have you done a comedy tape issue? Or soundtracks? I have: *2001, Clockwork Orange, Cheech and Chong Up In Smoke*, and a friend has *Heavy Metal* (the animated classic).

...I heard 8-track references in a Sears commercial, something about "that kind of person invests all their money in 8-tracks...while smart shoppers...blah blah," and on the Howard Stern radio show Stuttering John said Jacky is so old his comedy CD could be on 8-track...

I think my Quiet Riot *Metal Health* 8-T (CRC only) beats some on Trent Colby's list. I also saw Def Leppard *Pyromania* at the same time but they blow and aren't laughable to the degree that Q.R. is as "one-hit metal wonders."

...I've asked Japanese people and they've never heard of 8-tracks!! Also a Spanish guy at work said to another Spanish guy "Blah blah blah Nintendo blah blah blah." He thought my 8-Ts were video game carts. Fuckin' funny! And even after he was told he didn't know, he's a fairly recent immigrant from Guatemala. I guess they don't have 8-tracks down there. The other Spanish guy is Puerto Rican so he knew...

Brian
P.O. Box 8511
Warwick, RI 02888

EDITOR: And for you hardcore punk fans out there, Brian is in a band called Drop Dead who have put out 5" and 8" records among other things. We met him at a rough cut showing of our film at Newspeak bookstore in Providence, RI, and he put us up for the night. His 8-T collection is pictured on page 16.

ANOTHER DISSATISFIED CUSTOMER

Thanks for the back issues. I waited so long that I thought I'd never see them! Anyhow, here's some copies of tapes that should be interesting. The Mothers tape is the 4-track version, not the 8 version. Sounds good too, and is a good copy of the uncensored version of the LP. Keep up the good work, and if you can, please send me a (free) copy of #81.



Tim Mantovi
105 Winham Ave.
SI, NY 10306

EDITOR: See my Letter from the Editor for the story on why my mail answering skills have been going down the drain lately. Free copies of the magazine cost me 75¢ in postage to get to you, which may not seem like much, but with the penny-pinching that comes with making a film, it starts to seem like a fortune. 8-TM just ain't no Rolling Stone, thank God.

8-TRACK IN THE LAND OF THE RIO GRANDE

I recently received 8-TM #80 in the mail, and I really enjoyed it. I am an enthusiastic collector of '60s-'70s LPs and it only seems natural that I would also collect the format that I remember best from the '70s — the good ole 8-track. East Texas flea markets, thrift stores and garage sales abound with them and they are so cheap (25¢-50¢) it's been great fun to re-discover something I have overlooked for so long. As well, a \$5 Sears solid-state player sounds rockin' great on my stereo...

Kirsten Schwab
711 Fairway
Nacogdoches, TX 75961

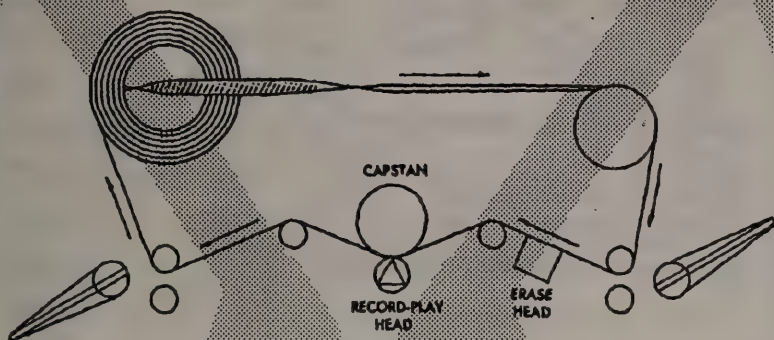
EDITOR: When it starts snowing here, I'll be on my way down to check out all these great tapes you write of. Or at least I'll dream of them...

A PREVIEW OF COMING ATTRACTIONS

Greetings! Hope you are well and happy and that THE MOVIE, THE MAGAZINE and all else is going your way...For a possible article (or possibly just general distraction), I'm researching the probable connection between 8-track technology and UFOs. I'm not kidding, Russ. Consider: William Lear's sons John and Bill, Jr. have both had numerous close encounters. John, as you may know, believes that saucers crashed and fell into government hands in the '40s and '50s. According to John, the first real communication between the aliens and the government began in 1964 and we were "sold" to the aliens in exchange for technology. And what did Bill Lear, Sr., who of course worked hand in hand with the government "invent" very shortly thereafter? 8-TRACK TECHNOLOGY! Russ, he stops to invent the 8-track in the midst of the birth of the Learjet! Then he makes a deal with Ford and the first Lear decks are placed in the Ford GALAXY, THUNDERBIRD and LINCOLN CONTINENTAL. Just words? Anyway, the hard questions have to be asked. Like was William Lear in cahoots with the aliens? Was Learjet technology over Bill's own head? Why was John cut from his father's will? Will all of this begin to explain the unexplainable attraction of the 8-track tape? And a bunch of other questions I haven't thought up yet. So I'll proceed with this and send you what comes. Not that I wouldn't think of you first, but I have a feeling this piece won't be right for OMNI. Tonight, I'm watching HANGER 51 and will continue my reading including THE WORLD ATLAS OF UFO SIGHTINGS, THE ULTIMATE DECEPTION by Commander X and Donna Kossy's new (and very cool) book KOOKS. Also, I want to thank Abigail Lavine for her review of the Lear bio in the last 8-TM. I think the Danny Kaye thing may lead somewhere and the helpful page number references saved me hours of valuable research time. Did you know that this same author wrote about KAREN SILKWOOD?

Jean Erhardt
8085 SW Ridgeway Dr.
Portland, OR 97225-3041

EDITOR: Stay tuned — next issue ("8-Track Across the Universe") will have the fruit of Ms. Erhardt's intense research! Yow!



YET ANOTHER ROCKIN' NEW 8-TRACK

Here's a copy of my band's release (*Hate Tracks* by Out Cold). It's not really for review or anything, just wanted you to have it. Hope you like it. Found Dead Boys *Young Loud and Snotty* on 8-T for 50¢ at a flea market. I talked to Cheetah Chrome and he said he'd never seen it before.

Mark Sheehan
P.O. Box 441
Dracut, MA 01828

EDITOR: So you found my holy grail, eh? Wanna trade for a good review of your tape? Just kidding — punk rock fans should grab *Hate Tracks* now!

MADEMOISELLE THRIFT SCORE SPEAKS!

Have been picking up the odd 8-track here and there — no punk yet but I stumbled onto a cache of shrinkwrapped New Wavish horrors — Go-Gos 1st, Pretenders II, Prince. I think they may stay wrapped. Don't get me started about The Police... Scored a LaWanda Page (Aunt Esther from Sanford and Son) ADULT PARTY TAPE that is rank, but seems to be a crowd pleaser... The best part about the LaWanda Page 8-T is how cheaply made it is. The jokes cut off in mid-sentence to change programs. Got the *Dolemite* soundtrack last weekend — shrinkwrapped. Those older black comedians and comediennes do travel together. They often had large and raucous shows in Wash. D.C. when I was there. There's still a large audience on what was once called the "chitlin' circuit."

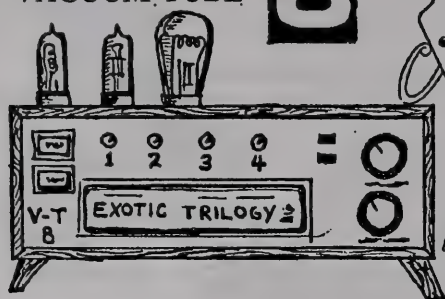
Big A/Thrift SCORE Magazine
P.O. Box 90282
Pittsburgh, PA 15224

EDITOR: Get Thrift SCORE Magazine now! 'Nuff said.

8-TM PUBLICATIONS/P.O. BOX 90/EAST DETROIT/MI/48021--

VACUUM TUBE

8



By Larry 7

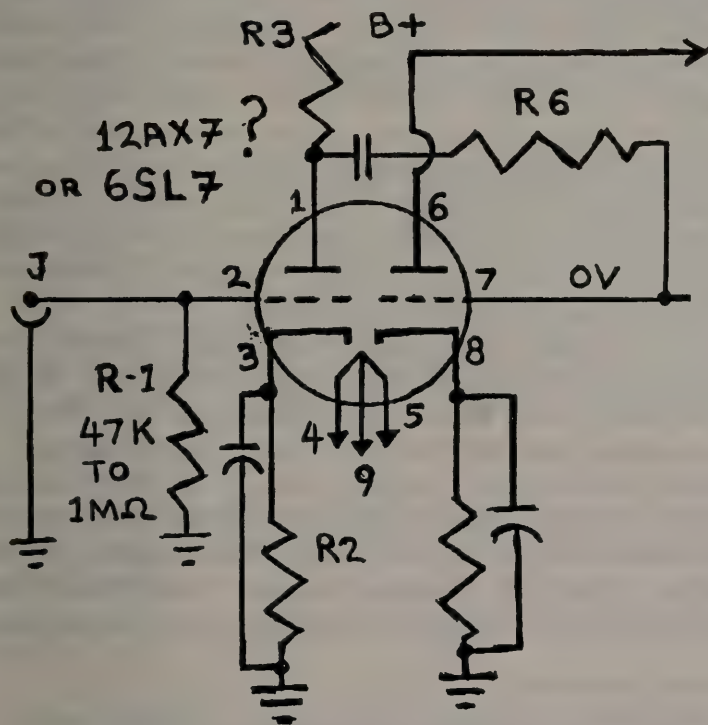
GREETINGS! THIS IS MY RECIPE FOR A DREAMY SOUNDING CARTRIDGE PLAYER THAT DIDN'T TAKE A LOT OF EFFORT.

INGREDIENTS:

- ① FLEA MARKET 8-TK PLAYER (3\$ OR SO)
\$9 SURPLUS UNIT FROM FALL 94' ISSUE
MIGHT BE A GOOD ONE TO GO WITH.
- ② ANY PRE-TRANSISTOR HI-FI SET WITH
MAGNETIC PHONO INPUTS (TAPE HEAD
INPUTS ARE COMMON IN AMPS FROM
LATE 50'S TO EARLY 60'S) YEAH *
- ③ A COUPLE OF $\frac{1}{2}$ MEG. Ω RESISTORS
FROM RADIO SHACK ®
- ④ SOLDERING GUN

HERE'S WHAT TO DO - SIMPLY SNIP LEADS OFF OF THE LOUSY TAPE HEAD PREAMP IN YOUR PLAYER & RE-SOLDER PLAY-BK HEADS DIRECTLY TO RCA OUTPUTS. IF YOU HAPPEN TO HAVE TAPE HEAD INPUTS ON YOUR SCOTT OR FISCHER AMP THEN PLUG IN & GO. *IF NOT, DROP THE LOADING

R-1 RESISTOR ON THE FIRST GRID OF PHONO STAGE. TO $\frac{1}{2}$ MEG. Ω , OR ONE MEG OR JUST LOSE ALLTOGETHER IF THERE IS INSUFICIENT GAIN, WHENEVER MY PALS DROP BY THEY ALWAYS LAUGH AT MY GOOFY SETUP BUT CAN'T STOP MARVELING AT HOW BOSS IT SOUNDS. (NOT ALWAYS) ALSO NICE ARE ANY PLAYBACK ELECTRONICS FROM OLD AMPEX ETC... REEL DECKS, TWO REQ'D IF NOT STEREO YET.



8-TRACK TAPE REVIEW

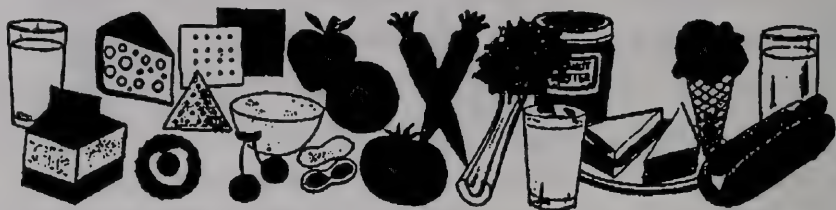
BY ANN MARIE MONAHAN

Gourmet Recipes for Your Easy Living: Recipes From the Four Basic Food Groups

Produced by Lary 7

Available for \$5.00 from

Plastikville®/190 E. 2nd St./Suite 16/New York/NY/10009



Sometimes a product arrives on the market which is so perfect and so timely, which captures the national zeitgeist so thoroughly, that it can only be hailed as a masterpiece. **Gourmet Recipes for Your Easy Living: Recipes From the Four Basic Food Groups** is just such a product. At a time when major marketing forces are at work trying to cram the so-called "innovation" of CD-ROM cookbooks down the throats of a reluctant public, the fine folks at Plastikville® have brought us the world's first cookbook which is available exclusively on 8-track tape. *Digital Cookbooks?* You read it right folks, sinister as it sounds, we analogists are no longer safe even in the kitchen.

Just how do these hi-tech tomes measure up? Consider for a moment the relative advantages of 8-track as opposed to CD for this type of application. First, there is cost to think about. While 8-tracks can run on machines which cost anywhere from 25 cents to 15 bucks, you need to shell out a couple grand for the computer and CD-ROM drive to run one of those newfangled robot donut¹ cookbooks. And then there's the price of the software. While Plastikville® is selling their **Gourmet Recipes** 8-track for the low, low price of just \$5.00, CD-ROM cookbooks can run you anywhere

¹ "robot donut" is analog slang for Compact Disc.

from \$39.95 for the **Lifestyles of the Rich and Famous Cookbook** all the way up to an incredible \$1,895.00 for **Human Nutrition**².

Then there is the matter of ease of use. 8-tracks are a cinch. Anyone with opposable thumbs can slam a track into the deck and get cooking. Not so for a CD-ROM. With any CD-ROM you must first install a program to run the sucker and then master a variety of commands. For example, it is suggested that buyers of the **Santé (For Good Health) CD** "...read Appendix A in the manual as soon as you open the package; it describes what the system can do and how you may want to apply functions to your interests. Appendixes B through G cover the rest of the basics you'll need to know *before starting to use the database.*"³ (Italics are mine.)

What about the issue of practicality? Well, at the risk of stating the obvious, very few people actually have kitchens equipped with PC workstations. In the words of Marian Burros, a cooking writer for the New York Times, "...it (the computer) might become a convenient receptacle for sauces, salad dressings and cake batter. Why would the cook want one?"⁴ On the other hand, I think I'm safe in assuming that many, if not most, readers of this magazine have 8-track players in their kitchens as well as in every other room of the house.

Finally, and most importantly, let's compare content, attitude and atmosphere. Here is where Plastikville® completely leaves the others in the dust. You may have noticed from the titles of CD cookbooks mentioned so far that there is a disturbing preponderance of titles aimed at the rollerblading health fascist crowd. Well, **Gourmet Recipes for Your Easy Living** thinks that you are smart enough to make up your own mind about what you want to eat. Since this tape is a compilation of seven people's favorite recipes,

² I'm not making this stuff up. These prices and titles come from Cheryl LaGuardia's "CD-ROM Review," Library Journal June 15, 1994, p. 103.

³ *ibid.*

⁴ Burros, Marian, "The Kitchen Computer: Promising Steak but Serving Burgers," The New York Times (W) Feb. 2, 1994, p. C1.

there is considerable variety in the culinary delights presented here. The tape offers choices which range from macrobiotic *Dairyless Bran Muffins* contributed by Bee Ploti (absolutely delicious; I wasted no time in trying out this recipe) to meaty and satisfying *Pork Towers*. Actually, the *Pork Towers* recipe, contributed by man-about-town Chet Grant, deserves some kind of special mention. It's the perfect no-cook way to use up those Saltine crumbs and that leftover gelatin, while at the same time enjoying all the goodness of "the other white meat."TM Also sounds like a darn good way to be sure not to be invited to any more church suppers.

Eat this for ENERGY if you prefer
but add other foods you need.



There is a wide variety of ethnic cuisine offered here — from *Swedish Meatballs* (contributed by Johan Kugelsmooth) to *Cubano Black Beans* (Maria Levitsky provided this recipe, passed down from what sounds like a very colorful stepfather) to authentically *Italian Sun Dried Tomatoes* (recipe by noted pundit Jim Sharpe, Esq.). Recipe contributors provide the narration, which sometimes includes a glimpse into their lives as well as their kitchens. How does 8-TM writer Abigail Lavine entertain when the gang stops by? With *Miso-Tahini Party Dip*, of course! Our friends at Plastikville® provide the mood through background music, sound effects and innovative recording techniques. For example, Jason Willet's *Orange Glaze Duck* (for the microwave!) is accented by sounds of a quacking duck being nuked.

Just as the title promises, the four food groups are duly represented (although admittedly, meat does predominate. I didn't realize before listening to this tape that *Swedish Meatballs* contained ground chuck, pork and liver.). The yummy cover art by 8-TM legend Brendan deVallance reminds me of the old joke about Irish Coffee containing all four food groups — the fat, alcohol, caffeine, and sugar groups. The lush look is Populuxe — lots of artery-hardening technicolor treats floating on an aqua background.

Overall, I cannot recommend this tape highly enough. It is a must for trackers who cook, an inspiration for trackers who don't cook, and an absolute necessity for every American who values his or her freedom to choose analog. Without a doubt, this is one of the very finest 8-track releases of the 1990s.∞

WHY CDS KILL MUSIC

BY MICHAEL TIERNEY (©1993)

EDITOR'S NOTE: Mr. Tierney sent this excellent treatise on the hollowness that "better future through technology" has left us with. If this doesn't convince you skeptics of the superiority of analog over digital, I don't know what will. The author can be reached at P.O. Box 3862/Los Angeles/CA/90078.

1993. The digital age. If you want spirit, you'd better get rich, because you're going to have to pay for it. CDs have replaced records by 95%. You've finally paid off you \$2,000 state-of-the-art stereo only to discover it's now outdated and on sale at K-Mart for \$200. Well, at least you have your CDs, a costly yet priceless collection of musical recordings which produce perfect music and never wear out. Certainly it is safe to say that these digitally mastered recordings are timeless and cannot be improved upon. Right???

CDs and digital recording instruments of any kind kill music. As long as we listen to digital music of any kind, we no longer have music. What we do have is an incredible *simulation*, but I repeat, it's not music — sort of like a fake diamond, only much more disastrous.

Long ago there was a time when the only way to experience music was to play an instrument or to be in the immediate presence of a musical performance. In those days, if you were cold, you'd start a fire, if you were hungry, you cooked some food, and if your nose was too big, it stayed that way.

As recording techniques and players were invented and improved upon, people slowly got used to the idea of substituting a recorded performance for a live one. Surely, there were many skeptics at first, but, eventually, most agreed on the value of sound recording.

The stereo or turntable became the musical instrument, "a contrivance or apparatus for producing musical sounds." The sound recording became the musician.

Musical vibrations were recorded onto master tapes in the form of tiny metal particles. From this our records and tapes were made.

A record player, utilizing a diamond needle, receives impressions from the grooves in a record. This causes the needle to vibrate, much like a guitar string or violin string does. This vibration produces direct electrical currents, which eventually become sound.

With these two forms of playback there is no separation from the initial musical vibrations. The original vibrations have maintained a continuous wave. Each impulse is the direct result of its predecessor. Although we're getting music which is second, third, even tenth generation, we are still getting music.

The nature of music is vibration. These vibrations create sound waves that then affect us emotionally, spiritually, intellectually and physically. Each of these sound waves produce a myriad of overtones which also affect us on very subtle levels. Whether you're listening to Punk Rock or Mozart, these sound waves and overtones give the music its life. For music to remain musical through the recording process, these sound waves must be continuous, flowing and organic. Analog recording and playback machines (records, tapes) retain these musical qualities. Digital does not.

As I said before, your stereo is a musical instrument. With digital recording and playback machines (CD players, DAT machines) this instrument is now a computer. But that's not all. The musician is also now a computer. The CD or digital tape does not play the computer as a record or tape plays the instrument of your stereo. Rather, this computer reads a series of instructions from the CD and then *re-performs* the music. What you hear is not the original performance, but, instead, a computer simulation.

The problem is, computers can't be made to convey an emotional, spiritual, or physical experience. It is simply not their nature. What we get is purely an intellectual process. Once the music enters this digital recording instrument/computer, we lose all emotional, spiritual, and physical connection to the original performance.

In order for a computer to reproduce a musical sound wave, it first must categorize the wave in the form of a grid. This computer grid recreates the sound wave as a staircase. No matter how intricate this grid, no matter how detailed the computer program, it will



never be able to accurately reproduce this musical sound wave. The stairs might get smaller, but they are still stairs, not a wave.

This simple fact explains the often heard complaint that CDs are edgy and abrasive. That they don't breathe or flow. That they aren't warm.

What this grid leaves us with is a computer-produced simulation of a sound wave, a computer-produced simulation of a musical performance. All the warmth is gone, because we've lost the connection to the original source. The music and overtones have all been adjusted into their most dominant factors. The end result is a complicated display of computer technology which has little to do with the original music.

To further illustrate this point, look at your television screen. If you look closely enough, you will see that the screen is made up of thousands of tiny points of light called pixels. Each light changes color to make up a seemingly complete picture. Each light can only be one color or shade at a time. The resultant picture is not one connected whole, but, instead, made up of thousands of these tiny lights.

This is how digital *recreates* music. It reads the music as thousands, even millions, of tiny lights or sound sources.

To the computer, the music never was and never will be a connected, whole body of sound. This is why a computer can't make accurate musical sounds. It can't receive the initial musical vibrations, physically and completely, as a record or tape can. To the

computer the music is not a physical experience but an idea, a creation of logic and the mind, and, consequently, it can only relate it as such.

Being fooled by these computer simulations has been easy. Especially when we're listening to music that we used to listen to in analog. It's easy for us to "fill in the blanks" and pretend that it's all there. But some things are missing. Other things are changed.

It's like the difference between a vase made by hand and fired in a kiln, versus one glued together by a computer with millions of tiny clay and glass particles. It might look like the same thing, but it's not. It didn't go through the same alchemical process of being molded and glazed by the artist, sealed and fused by the fire, cooled correctly, etc.

Computerized/digital music, like the vase, is riddled with holes. It is of a completely different nature and creative source and because of this can never satisfy us emotionally, physically, or spiritually. Instead of a soothing warm bath we have a tub full of millions of tiny ice cubes.

Now, surely some will say, "But I do have emotional responses to CD music." Yes, you do. The difference is that you, an emotional being, are responding to the *computer's* performance of the music, rather than the musician's performance of the music. The only connection you have to the *original* performance is through your intellect. That's the only way the computer experiences, and that's the only way the computer relates.

Don't take anyone's word for it. Do a comparison and *experience* the difference for yourself. Take a record or analog tape of your favorite recording and compare it to a CD version. Make sure the tape or record is not from digital masters (this is usually stated on the packaging). When listening, *feel* the difference.

With digital, can you hear and feel the computer singing and playing the various instruments? Can you feel the millions of tiny "sound cubes" forming "sound staircases"?

With analog, can you feel the breath and life present in the room? Can you feel the sound waves splashing air currents over and through your body and around the room?

How do you feel after extended listening of each?

For this experiment, I suggest listening to the music in a contained, and, if possible, uncarpeted room. This will allow the overtones to freely bounce around the room, giving your entire body the full experience of the music.

Forget about scratches in a record. In fact, it's recommended that you take your oldest, scratchiest record and see if it doesn't have more life than a CD version.

Many people feel that these computerized/digital sounds are actually antagonistic to us physically and emotionally, that the abrasive qualities of these "sound staircases" actually wear us down instead of replenishing us.

This makes sense when you consider that all day long we hear sounds in analog. Everything from car horns to birds chirping comes to our ears in analog sound waves. When suddenly our bodies are bombarded with digital sounds through a CD, our minds may be fooled, but our bodies hear these sounds as the unnatural forms that they truly are.

Perhaps we've let computers intrude into our lives a bit too far. Maybe we can stop this before we have push-button guitars or digitally mastered paintings. Maybe it's more than just a coincidence that the A.I.D.S. epidemic entered our culture at roughly the same time as CDs, and it seems to be growing at about the same rate.

We can't accuse CDs of causing A.I.D.S. But maybe the lack of real music in our lives, music that feeds and replenishes not only the mind, but the spirit, body, and soul, has made it harder for us to heal ourselves, to find cures for our diseases, to regenerate and change our physical forms.

Maybe this lack of real music has also made us more violent and frustrated, causing much of the recent increase in gun ownership, killings, etc.

In this digital age, escaping these computer sounds is not as easy as one might think. For example, most films today record all dialog and sound effects digitally. Some films

boast of having digital scores. 99% of radio airplay is now from the CD format. Many television shows use digital sound effects and dialog recording exclusively. This de-humanization of modern art and man has got to have an effect, the results of which only time will tell.

One writer suggests that if computers are reproducing music, even composing it, why not the next logical step of having computers be the ones to also listen to it.

This is not to say that computers and modern technology are bad or wrong (their advantages are numerous and need not be stated here). It is to say that there are some things computers can't, and shouldn't, do.

Our bodies are warmed by fire, cooled by air, nourished by water and food. If we substitute air for food or water for fire, we cause imbalances in our bodies and our lives.

I'm afraid CDs are a big mistake — fake diamonds that cost us more than the real thing.

In this age of the artificial heart, science has taken away one of our most sacred arts. Here are some suggestions as to how you can take it back:

1. Stop buying CDs.
2. Stop buying records and tapes that come from digital masters.
3. Buy only records and tapes that come from analog master tapes.
4. Let your local record stores know how you feel.
5. Write letters to record companies.
6. For musicians: Eliminate digital recording, digital effects, digital keyboards, and digital instruments of any kind.
7. If you are a popular recording artist and must put out CDs, you can insure the preservation of your music by recording only in analog. Then, when CDs are gone, you won't be left with digital masters — complete misrepresentations of your original music. Also, insist that analog cassette tapes are made available to the public and make sure these tapes don't come from digital masters. Finally, if you're really bold, put a disclaimer on you CDs explaining that what the listener hears is not a complete or accurate representation of the original music.
8. If you're a filmmaker, avoid digital sound effects, scores, and dialog recordings to allow the feeling and emotion of these sounds back into your films.
9. Start playing a musical instrument.

Making music is an alchemical process. A fusing of emotion, spirit, and thought, which then pours out of our physical bodies through singing and playing musical instruments. Once this process is intellectualized through a computer, the music has died. The music, like the Self, cannot live without a physical body or vehicle. Without the physical properties of analog tapes or records, etched by musical vibrations, and read with diamonds and magnets, the music is no longer alive. The original music is no longer a fact, but an idea, programmed into a computer. Hence, the title of this article.

I'll end with a quote of Neil Young's from the article that sparked what I have written, entitled, "Digital Is a Huge Rip-Off" (*Guitar Player* magazine, May 1992). It ends with this quote: "I've been making records for 26 years, working in the studio, writing songs, listening to music, and I'm telling you: From the early '80s up till now and probably for another 10 or 15 years is the darkest time for recorded music ever. We'll come out the other end and it'll be okay, but we'll look back and go, 'Wow, that was the digital age. I wonder what it really sounded like? They were so carried away that they didn't really record it. They just made digital records of it.' That's what people will say — mark my word."∞

EIGHT-TRACKS OVER NORMANDY

BY DAN SUTHERLAND



I had been looking forward to the eight-track moviemaking adventure with a degree of ambivalence. On one hand the entire project sounded too good to be true: Drive around the country in a van with Russ and shoot footage of my favorite types of people and their analog lovelies. The other part was the voice of moral responsibility screaming in my ear: my closest uncle was terminally ill, my mother was sick and another uncle had just died from a massive coronary. I visited my Uncle Chuck to see what he thought. I didn't want to be gone and never see him again. He was pretty direct: "Don't worry and make your goddamn movie because you'll always make up excuses to sit on your duff and not get a damn thing done."

He was right. So I took off for all of March with our publisher and editor, Russ Forster. The trip turned out to be an incredibly worthwhile endeavor.

When I returned to the Midwest, I headed straight to Muskegon to spend some time with Uncle Chuck. His once robust frame of 6'4", 250 lbs. had been reduced to scarecrow proportions. His magnificent baritone had become a catarrhic rattle. His eyes were still clear and sharp as were his other powers of observation.

He keenly sensed that no amount of lamb's blood above the threshold lintel would keep the angel of death away. He wanted to die in his own way in his own house. It was a simple home his father had built many years before on land that had been within the family since before Michigan petitioned for statehood.

Watching a person perish by degrees reveals how their reality is reduced. People who once governed massive estates and acreage rarely leave the house. Then a series of rooms and finally one room is enough. Surrounded by a few mementoes, they make peace with themselves and their surroundings, leaving little to clutter the mind.

Chuck had not left his bedroom for the better part of two months. On the shelf were pictures of his children and grandchildren, model airplanes, high school yearbooks and a few odds and ends.

I saw him twice after the eight-track tour. The first time we talked about the family. He cleared my up on family matters I had never been aware of. But he was really glad I had made the effort to make the movie trek. "Why?" I asked.

He asked me to bring him the high school yearbooks. They were from the late thirties. He turned the coated stock pages to the section about high school organizations. He stopped at the pages dedicated to the musically adroit. There was an entire page about the Grand Haven High School Jazz Band. My own Uncle Chuck — young, smiling like Jack Nicholson — was the attributed drummer and 'Jazz Combo Leader.'

"That was one of the best times I ever had," he told me. "After high school there wasn't much work. So I kept the band going. We had hopes of making a go at it. We cut some big lacquer discs."

"Did you hang on to them?"

"Shortly had them for the longest time. He transferred them to cartridges more than twenty years ago."

"Cartridges? You mean like eight-tracks?"

"Exactly, Danny. All of our music is on eight-track."

I was afraid to speak. Had he hung on to them? Did he ever play them again? Were they transferred to cassette? Did they wander away in a purge of a yard sale?

"They're around here somewhere. I think in the other room."

I went to the stereo. It was an early seventies Radio Shack number with a collage of software functions. Behind it, in a large carousel, was a collection of Basin Street Jazz, Big Band and a few hand made tapes. Three of these were labeled with the simple titles of '1st session', '2nd', and '3rd'.

I took them back to the bedroom and showed Uncle Chuck. He confirmed that these were the 'one offs' from the master discs. But...

"Hell, Dan, these broke the last time I played them. You can't fix these."

I told him I learned a few tricks on the tour and that maybe I could fix them.

We talked some more that day. I asked about the model airplanes. They were of an aircraft called the Boston Bomber. It was a two engine, short range fighter bomber. It was used primarily in the European Theatre of WWII. It was not the high level, heavy bomber that is glorified in so many films about brave men who bomb civilian targets from miles in the air. The Boston Bomber was designed to hit a military target from a low altitude. My Uncle Chuck piloted on from 1942 until the end of the war.

One of his most memorable missions was D-Day. The Bostons provided air support and pinpoint bombing. He said that he flew from dawn until dusk. "We'd fuel up. Go across the channel. Do our dirty work and come back to do it all over again. You know, Europe is a lot further North than the U.S. So, a full day's work in June can really tell on you."

When he returned from the war he had a wife and two children to take care of. The jazz band idea was scrapped and never returned to. Four more children followed the brace. My Uncle Chuck became a real working guy with time for family dreams and little else. The days of the jazz band and the cockpit must have seemed like another lifetime to him.

I took the eight-tracks home. They were in pretty bad shape. I ironed the wrinkled mag stock between wax paper using an antique clothing iron that was heated on oven prepped bricks. There were wisecracks at the repair shop when I took the iron in to have it degaussed. "You're a real nutcase, Sutherland. All of this effort for eight-tracks. Why don't you just cut it off, the tape that's bad? Bring the tapes in here and degauss those. You know, Danny Boy, they sell Bicycle Helmets your size at Toys R Us," were some of the endearments I heard from the staff.

Some may admit that the degaussing might have been an invitation to masochism. But I wanted to do things right. After the tape flattening came new foil. I rebuilt the decaying sponge with furniture foam and added a drop of 3 in 1 oil to the pinch roller.

I started making cassette dubs for Chuck and his kids and grandkids and my mom and dad that same day.

I went back to his little house the next day. His only son and eldest daughter were there. Chuck didn't look too good. He had become more weak and there was a sallow jaundice to his skin. The hospital had set up a home hospice environment for him. (That was to be the kindest medical improvisation I've seen this year.) My uncle wanted to die in his own home. I felt a bit silly when I showed him the eight-tracks and all of the cassettes I had dubbed off.

"Oh, you fixed them? I'll pay you for the dubs," he managed.

"Don't worry about that. I had fun doing it. Want to hear one?"

He nodded. My cousin and I brought the speakers in from the living room and into his space. We sat quietly and listened to sounds that had been cut more than fifty years before.

I'd like to say that the music was revelatory and worth reissuing on Blue Note and all. It wasn't. But the band had a great dance feel to it. And it was evident that they could have made a living at it and even cultivate their abilities into a contract career.

The tapes lightened up the room a great deal. My Uncle was smiling and there was a bit more color in his face.

"We didn't have but one microphone. They wouldn't let us do more than one take," he said. "How do you think we did back then?"

My cousins and I agreed that the band did really well. We didn't voice any of the cliché regrets: "You should have kept at it; Why did you ever stop." What was the point of introducing that kind of narrative?

My Uncle Chuck was pretty exhausted at that point in the afternoon.. He asked up to turn him over. I said good bye and he went to sleep. I spoke with my cousins for a little while and went home.

Uncle Chuck died about a week after we played the music for him. He had a simple funeral. I am very glad to have spent that time with him and to have fixed the old carts. I'm also glad that I took his advice earlier in the year. He died known as a good father and a great family man and small business man. Before that he had been a gallant warrior who started out as a troubadour.

And one of the great things I learned from him is that yearnings and opportunities are rarely coincidental.∞

8-TRACKS OF THE GODS? (RETEXTING 8-TRACK TAPES)

BY J. KEVIN UNSELL

Although one could pontificate at length on any number of subjects relating to the set that is the 8-Track Mind, I wish to apply a more experimental approach and try to present 8-tracks as true anthropological relics that not only reference a certain frame of time but (in a Philip K. Dick, *Chariots of the Gods* way) contain the texts to predict the future. Instead of treating carts as archaic, obsolete relics, let them come under multifaceted examination in order to question where we are within our "world" and how we can reinterpret their text.

Apart from the unique properties that separate 8-tracks from albums or compact discs (like "bleeding" of programs over other programs, "clicking," quad-structured fo(u)rmat), there also seems to exist a fair case for employing Jacques Derrida's theory of deconstruction and subsequent reinterpretation of a given text (in this case, the text is the 8-track tape). Derrida argues that a text can exist in more than just its "intended" way and that the true essence of a text actually shines through in what he calls the "margins": the heretofore unnoticed or unacceptable interpretations that suggest different theories.

In short, it's important to develop these alternative theories because any of them could hook your brain onto a new way of grasping a concept. Think of the way those 3-D stereogram computer drawings that are all the rage now actually "work." It's difficult to say but they do in much the same way the binary-via-Sumerian software in *Snow Crash* can re-encode your brain.

One way to unearth these margins is an examination of a category of carts ripe with the possibility of reinterpretation: bootlegs. Albeit this area of concentration was touched upon in *8-TM* #79, it has taken this long for a definitive study to surface.

THE EXHUMATION AND RETEXTUALIZATION OF BOOTLEGS (or These Boots Is Made For Talking)

If only some of these ancient relics could talk but, suffice to say, the text (be it cover art, music, et al.) present within these carts speaks volumes about not only past but more importantly, future. We will utilize Malcolm Riviera's category system as outlined briefly in *8-TM* #79 but go more fully in depth as well as adding anecdotal examples from my own vast cart library.

The first (and in my opinion the least interesting) category of boots is called "pirated" tapes. These are carts that are most often a re-release of an existing 8-track that is then mass-produced and sold at a much cheaper price (remember that 8-track culture was one of the first affordable recording media). These tapes are the least interesting to me because they delve the least into Derridian "margins" being almost exact reproductions of existing 8-tracks. However, several anomalies in this category are worth mentioning.

ISAAC HAYES, *SHAFT VOL I* (no company listed):

On this 8-track, instead of the original cover art depicting Richard Roundtree firing a revolver, this reappropriation contains a tilted photo of a burned tree stump housing what looks like two yellow gourds or cassava melons! What this has to do with John Shaft is left up to the mind of the discerning text interpreter. Do the gourd/melons represent the enormous gonads of our fearless hero? Is the burned tree stump supposed to represent the dying ghetto? Wait! Another interpretation could exist.

The title track is listed mysteriously as "Theme From Shafr" (sic). In essence, this could be the soundtrack to an entirely different film.

ROCK HITS OF TODAY, VOL. 41 (no company listed):

Although most people might interpret this tape as a way for a company to make a fast buck by releasing this compilation of "rock hits," I see a far more sinister plot brewing. The cover photo depicts a swinging "mod" band playing while three "birds" and one mop-topped guy gig it up. Behind the whole scene are some bright marquee lights with this very faint logo at the top left: "MAS ROCK: LOS CAMISAS NEGRAS." The song titles and artists are hilariously butchered. Olivia Newton John's moniker is reduced to all lower case (à la e.e. cummings or bell hooks) predicting her lower profile in the years to come while a duet of "Whenever I Call You Fiend" (sic) is attributed to Kenny Loggins and Stevie Nicky (sic). Although it sounds like the original artists, could the band actually be Los Camisas Negras? And is this band fronted by one Stevie Nicky? Just asking.



The next category is "tribute" tapes, most often carts with songs by cover bands and aimed toward the market that would not notice the difference until the tapes were played. Oftimes, these tapes just listed the songs with no artists whatsoever. An examination of the music and cover art of these tapes leads me to think that these are not merely cover versions of the songs but, instead, the original songs themselves that the more famous artists simply ripped off. Such is the open-ended reinterpretation that these relics allow.

TOP TEN ROCK 80-1 (Par Music):

Although many superb retexualizations of "hit" rock songs appear (e.g. "Babe," "Dirty White Boy," "Good Girls Don't"), the true distillation of this cart can be realized through playing the version of "Tusk." The first thing you notice about the song is the dominance of synthesizers: the drums and guitars are actually synth-produced and very flat sounding. The vocalists sound nothing like the "original" and the woman singing (maybe it's the ubiquitous Stevie Nicky!) has a much deeper voice than the faux Lindsey Buckingham. A hysterical text that gives pause to the "what-if" proposition that "Fleetwood Mac" was really a synth band. Mind boggling. Also, on

"It's a Heartache" the vocalist goes way overboard trying to deepen her voice à la Bonnie Tyler but ends up sounding like she's fronting death metal band Cannibal Corpse (a prediction of things to come).

Next, we come to one of my favorite categories of boots: Malcolm calls them "home" tapes but I'd like to call them "relic" tapes. These carts started their lives as blanks which eventually got taped over with radiocasts or home taping. These relics are very unique to the 8-track medium because, in theory, they don't exist anywhere else in the world: they are truly original texts.

SATURDAY NIGHT, BASF 90, WYCA, HOST: LES BUTLER:

This sonic text is a broadcast of a gospel show that originated from Hammond, Indiana. Program One begins regularly enough with the news of the day but soon begins to deconstruct and accept "bleeding" from other programs. As the newscaster is reading this stilted copy, huge jolts of static erupt as do snippets of gospel songs from the other programs combining to sound like something off a futuristic Negativland album. This newly formed text is similar to listening to spoken work with very distorted sampling added: a thoroughly post-modern concept considering (in theory) that this tape was recorded before the advent of sampling. Who's to say? Soon, the music begins ("The sweetest music this side of heaven," the announcer intones) and most of it is discernible as gospel but because of the bleeding, it comes off like the Butthole Surfers-meet-Freakwater with some croaking frogs backing them. Program Four may be the best: scripture reading that is punctuated with song fragments and really loud buzzing. If church were this bugged out, maybe I'd start going again.

A CHORUS LINE, MEMOREX 80:

I thought this was a run of the mill, boring show tune tape until Program Four "clicked" in. After the show stopping finale, "One," ends, there is a bizarre dialectic between two very young girls no doubt messing around with their parent's newly purchased recording medium. This text is structured like an interview with one girl asking the other about something neither knows much about: SEX! From the surface, the girls can't be very old at the time this tape was made and the recording is a bit rough at times but, I swear to God, it comes off like inadvertent kiddie porn.

GIRL 1: "How do you like to have sex?"

GIRL 2: "I'm not that kinda woman. I don't like sex. I like huggin', kissin', bon bons (!), makin' out but no sex! I'm allowed to have babies but I'm not that kinda woman."

GIRL 1: "How old are you?"

GIRL 2: (long pause) "I'm between one years old and 100."

GIRL 1: "How many kids do you have?"

GIRL 2: (affecting a much older voice) "My husband works for a very big job."

(?!)

GIRL 1: "What are your kids' names?"

GIRL 2: "Jamie, Christina, Michael, John, Melanie, Sarah, Susie, Michele, Campbell...(ad infinitum)."

The conversation goes on for a bit longer but Girl 2 never touches upon the fact that she's had so many children without having sex. The dialectic ends with Girl 1 saying, "Is this the end of the tape?" Unfortunately, it is, although the tape goes into a really lame cover of "Surfin' USA." Too bad we never find out more about this odd predating of the safe sex manifesto or the girls' wacky interpretation of the immaculate conception. Yet, the surreality alone is worth the trip.



Above: On the great old island laboratory about astronomical phenomena covered an enormous mass of stone, debris, and wreckage. Below: On a large scale of stone, in this case water remains to be long and the first one.



Here is no recorded history of Tishuanaco. On the Gate of to Sun, carved out of a single limestone block, is the representation of a flying god flanked by forty-eight mysterious figures, attendants of a golden spaceship which came from the stars.



The next five photographs are from South America, a continent teeming with ruins and unexplained puzzles. Above: Part of a huge, monolithic block weighing an estimated 20,000 tons. It

Finally within the realm of bootlegs, we come to a new and emerging category. With the finite supply of blank 8-tracks slowly evaporating, now comes the time to start utilizing pre-recorded blanks as a way of continuing the 8-track tradition. Bands are releasing new music on 8-tracks and home tapers are using old carts to create new texts and dialogues. Lévi-Strauss would term this reappropriation "bricolage" or an ad hoc assemblage of miscellaneous materials and signifying structures. It is important to note here that a literal interpretation of bricolage is "do it yourself." In essence, these pioneers are creating a new art form: Futapes. Futapes allow the imaging of the original text on the 8-track to emerge right along side whatever you're taping over.

One of the progenitors of this futape phenomenon is the experi-noise-core band Frontier, from Chicago. Their eponymous 8-track debut is available around Chicago (where one Mr. F.R. Forster picked one up) and each one is completely unique because not only is this new music on 8-track but whatever was left on the original cart recording is left intact. Imagine one of those Old Masters painting something that he didn't like and then going back over it and painting something else: this is a simple way of conceptualizing futapes.

FRONTIER (Kansas 8-Tracks, 1236 N. Campbell, Chicago, IL, 60622):

Similar to their previous *Hermaphrodite Tales* 8-track, cart legends Frontier continue their assault on analog lovers everywhere and rise to the top of the futape throne. While the music of Frontier pounds through Program One, after the first "click" a short sample of a lonely country crooner pipes in briefly creating a whole new way to interpret the song. On my cart, the real bricolage begins in the middle of Program Four when Frontier ends and some of the original gospel songs left over on the tape begin to filter through. One song in particular is a stand-out: a gospel quartet keeps begging the question of what would happen if "Jesus came to your town today." They keep reiterating this prime question, substituting the names of various locales (Boston, Salt Lake City, Shreveport, Wall Street (!)) and ending with the much contemplated snippet: "Would you laugh and call Him crazy/And send Him on his way/If Jesus came to your town today." It's enough to question my atheism.

NIRVANA'S LAST CONCERT (no company listed):

This is probably The Holy Grail within my collection of futapes and it never fails to baffle anyone who hears it or looks at the cover art (in particular, when I 8-track DJed for one of F.R. Forster's film screenings in Chicago). The cover photo is a sleeping (dead?) Kurt Cobain cradling future Riot Grrrl Frances Bean. The actual tape text is Nirvana's last concert in Italy that was bootlegged down to 8-track format (it's the only format I would have). The most unusual facet of the tape is the opera arias that resurface occasionally at the beginning of each program and then continue to bleed into the quieter moments of the tape. So the question remains: are these opera samples legitimate surfacings from the original text or a macabre portending to the timeless nature of Mr. Cobain? I'm the only one with a copy and I'm not talkin'.∞

THE COLLECTOR

BY TRENT COLBY

Quite a few collectors I have spoken to are hoping I would answer the rather vitriolic comments of Mr. Brendan deVallence concerning collecting 8s that appeared in the last issue. This debate is getting tiresome and is something I can live without. This column is for information and entertainment only. I will say that any collector bashing that this magazine publishes only helps to legitimize collecting 8s, a notion that not too long ago was laughable. In this case, any publicity is good publicity.

One of the most overlooked aspects of 8 collecting has to be the significance of the sleeve. Little regard has been shown for the value of what I would consider a "complete tape." It certainly enhances the attractiveness of the cart when centered and outlined by a clean and proper sleeve.

Possibly the best part of sleeves is that they are free. Walk into any thrift and there might be, let's say, 50 tapes. Perhaps 5-10 still have sleeves. You buy 5. Needless to say the 5 you buy have sleeves on them. The 5 sleeves you left should then be placed on the 5 tapes least likely to sell before you come back again. You will soon build up an inventory to draw on.

Let's go back to 1972. Eagerly purchasing *Exile on Main Street* on 8, you rush to the car, take it out of its box sleeve and shove it in the deck. Who knows what later happened to the "art box" the tape came in. Probably tossed as the tape was difficult to put back in the box and if you did it was equally impossible to get it in a slot in your tape holder. Such was the fate of most of these "art boxes."

Art boxes for the uninitiated were open sided sleeves with the original LP art work. The cartridge most often also had the same art work although Warner/Atlantic did produce a cart with only the song titles. If you have one of these you know it came with an art box sleeve. All pink cartridges from Warner/Atlantic had at one time an art box now long gone.

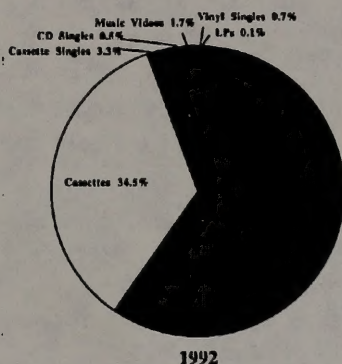
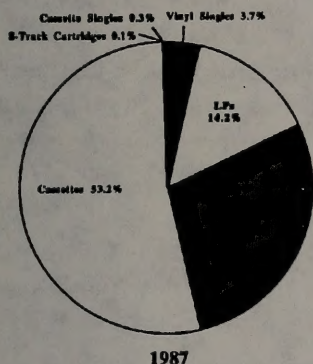
In my opinion, art boxes will lead the way when 8-tracks become legit. Carts are beautiful items with one of these. Labels using art boxes at one time (1965-1975 just guessing) include RCA, GRT, Chrysalis (green J. Tull carts!), Warner/Atlantic/Reprise, Rolling Stone, and London.

Close relatives of the art box, and equally desirable, are title sleeves, tubs and custom boxed sets. Title sleeves, as their name would suggest, were sleeves that printed the name of the LP on the edge as well as the song lineup on the back. Everyone is familiar with the "Ampex tape," the one with the small picture over the song titles. Ampex produced for lots of labels and produced lots of tapes. Every Ampex tape had at one time a title sleeve. How many are there today?

Colgems, RCA, Crescendo (Seeds), and probably a few other labels produced, in the early days, the "tub." Hard plastic, and in the shape of a bathtub with a cover, the tub, I'm sure, was short lived. You do see the tapes here and there. They have a yellow label that lists song titles and takes up all of the front of the cart. Notable artists with tub tape holders are Monkees, Archies, and Elvis. RCA in fact went from tub to art box and finally to the familiar generic sleeve. Most other labels also phased out the art box* in favor of simpler and no doubt cheaper label sleeves in the mid-'70s.

Apple Records, in my mind, produced the most desirable 8-track item in the market today: the custom box. The following are available in these beautiful containers: Beatles *White Album* (3 tape version), John and Yoko *Sometime in New York City* and *Wedding Album*, Yoko Ono *Fly*, and the semi-familiar George Harrison *All Things Must Pass*. I hope there are others you can bring to my attention c/o 8-TM.

% Share of Recorded Music Sales by Format



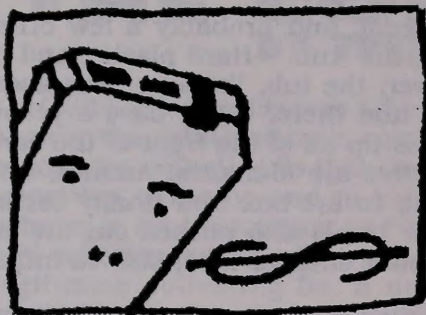
8 big names on art boxes (no imports)

- 1 — Stones
- 2 — Beatles
- 3 — Led Zeppelin
- 4 — Alice Cooper
- 5 — Jimi Hendrix
- 6 — Beach Boys
- 7 — Grateful Dead
- 8 — Zappa

8 art box favorites

- 1 — Court of the Crimson King
- 2 — Trout Mask Replica
- 3 — first Kiss LP
- 4 — Made in the Shade
- 5 — Hawkwind
- 6 — After Bathing at Baxter's
- 7 — Grateful Dead (skeleton)
- 8 — Exile on Main Street

*The art box made a somewhat feeble comeback on Warner quads.∞



Soul Intact

I will admit a predetermined draw to the obsolete. That has always been my path: Beaten to the discarded. And let's face it that is why we are drawn to 8-Track. Sure we all have the arguments down as to why they are better than CD's or cassettes or vinyl, but sometimes I do have a hard time keeping a straight face as I deliver the facts.

- 8-Track tape moves twice as fast as the tape in a cassette.
- No rewinding
- I picked up Badfingers entire catalogue for under \$3.00
- Bonus and repeated tracks

But let's face it we're talking out of the tops of our hats. We want to convert these heathens and the truth can be damaging. How 8-Tracks actually sound in comparison to other formats is quite immaterial to me. I'm scoping out soul and vision and sometimes it just sounds better on 8-Track. The wow verses flutter may be a losing battle but the

8 is Enough

by Brendan deVallance

deVallance mouths off
about all things 8-Track

soul content is way high.

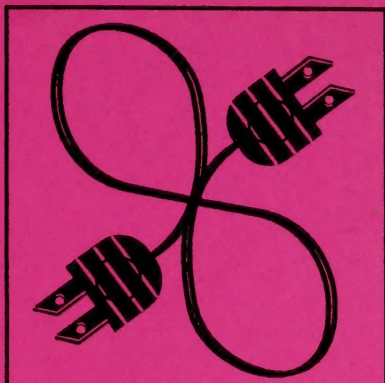
To get a bead on this soul depth compare a listen to Led Zeppelins first album on CD vs once around on the endless 8. The original tapes are recorded on expensive multi-track reel to reel equipment. With a CD the magnetic information is translated to digital information. And there is very little room for a rack of warmth in this translation. Ones and zeros, man it's all just ones and zeros. It's like translating Russian poetry into English. It becomes another thing.

An 8-Track tape is made of magnetic tape. The original masters for Led Zep were recorded and then mixed down to another format of the same medium. The soul is captured intact, no translation necessary. It's just being duplicated not translated. This even gives 8-Track an edge over vinyl. So play away on 8-Track. Let the pinch rollers roll and may your foam pads stay springy.

PLUGS

COMPILED BY F. R. FORSTER

From the continuing flood of correspondence to *8-TM* we've found that there are videotapes, magazines, newsletters and other resources dedicated trackers should know about. Support your local and national 8-track enthusiast by patronizing the products of those who are doing their part to keep the analog underground alive and thriving!



Lary 7/190 E. 2nd St. #16/New York/NY/10009. A brand new 8-track with "alternative" recipes, some disgusting and some useful. Only \$5! (See page 22 for review.)

Fourteen Records/2913 Greenville/Dallas/TX/75206. Send self-addressed-stamped-envelope for latest list of exciting 8-track products. Send your want list too.

C.G. Colson/416 Wellington/Chicago/IL/60657. Yet another brand new 8-track for sale, this one by pop master Mark Andrews, and it's only \$2!

F.R. Forster/8-TM Publications/P.O. Box 90/East Detroit/MI/48021-0090. Hot off the presses are the new *8-Track Mind* Film t-shirts, x-large, white print front and back on black shirts, only \$10 (checks made out to "Russel Forster")!

Douglas Von Hoppe c/o K & P Ltd/488 Seventh Ave/Suite 6G/NY/NY/10018. Federal Films latest kult release, LiAM, is now available on VHS. Send \$10 or one working 8-Track player for each copy.

Kitschy Kitschy Coup/P.O. Box 9111/Cambridge/MA/02140. \$1 and 2 stamps will bring you this compendium of underground music and culture. Well worth it.

The '70s Revisited/227 Hampshire Dr./Chalfont/PA/18914. '70s nostalgia from a shadowy character named "Richie Cunningham" for a buck, cash.

Mark Sheehan/P.O. Box 441/Dracut/MA/01826. His Punk Rock band Out Cold has a loud and nasty 8-track called *Hate Tracks* for you!

Teenage Gang Debs/P.O. Box 1754/Bethesda/MD/20827-1754. All the information you could ever want to know about '70s TV, especially the *Brady Bunch*. One of the authors, Erin, is also in a cool band called *Bratmobile*. \$2 + 2 stamps.

Thrft SCORE/P.O. Box 90282/Pittsburgh/PA/15524. Nice compendium of the joys of "thrifting." Great stories, great scores — and it's only a buck! (Add postage by mail.)

C.J Wilson/P.O. Box 3413/London/SE11 4UP/ENGLAND. Mr. Wilson puts out an excellent fanzine called *FURTHER TOO*, worth crossing the ocean for.∞

THE 8 NOBLE TRUTHS OF THE 8-TRACK MIND

- 0) Understanding one's fate leads to greater acceptance.
 - 1) State of the art is in the eye of the beholder.
 - 2) Society's drive is on attaining rather than experiencing.
- 3) In less than optimum circumstances, creativity becomes all the more important.
- 4) Progress is too often promises, promises to get you to buy, buy.
- 5) "New" and "improved" don't necessarily mean the same thing.
 - 6) "Naive" is not a dirty word.
- 7) In seeking perfection has the obvious been overlooked?
 - 8) Innovation alone will not replace beauty.∞

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